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### MISE EN SCÈNE IN THE ORIGINAL AND ADAPTATION: NARRATIVE ORGANISATION OF THE EVENT IN ITS INTERNAL SYMBOLISM

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**Zoia Ihina. Mise en scène in the original and adaptation: Narrative organisation of the event in its internal symbolism.** This article explores narrative organisation of the event in the literary story *Nunc dimittis* by T. Lee and the screen version of the same name. The event in its entirety of concrete episodes is a change of states with *the known* and *the unknown* confronting each other throughout the whole narrative. The character of the known side is a young criminal, while a female vampire and her servant stand for the unknown. The literary story and its screen version (the filmic narrative) are brought to comparison in terms of *the authentic retranslation* that reproduces the original event in another (cinematic) medium in detail, but with minor fluctuations seen in each episode separately. In the article, the mode of retranslation is shown according to the pattern *the original—a transponent*, where the original is the initial, primary work, and transponents are the products of intermedial, or extracompositional reinterpretation (in this article the only existing screen version is at issue). All adaptations, notwithstanding their number, make up the matrix of a certain narrative together with the original. The literary as well as the filmic episodes of *Nunc dimittis* resolve into three types of *mise en scène* where the latter term is defined as the elements that make up the event. The types suggested include the enclosed *mise en scène* keeping all the participants inside up to its end; the pass-through *mise en scène* that adheres to one of the characters who is in and out; the open *mise en scène* where the characters take turns in coming and going. Minor differences between the original and its transponent concern the symbolic load on the names of characters and their actions, which do not change, but rather amplify the original message of the story.

**Keywords:** adaptation, *mise en scène*, original, retranslation, transponent.

#### **З. О. Ігіна. Мізансцена в оригіналі й адаптації: нарративна організація події в її внутрішньому символізмі.**

Статтю присвячено вивченню мізансцени як способу нарративної організації події в оповіданні Т. Лі *Nunc dimittis* та його однойменній екранізації. Подія у сукупності конкретних інцидентів тлумачиться як зміна станів, що пронизує весь нарратив у втіленні конфронтації *реального з незвіданим*. Представник з боку реального в аналізованому нарративі – молодий злочинець, незвідане репрезентоване жінкою-вампіром та її слугою. Літературне першоджерело співставлене з екранізацією з позиції *автентичної ретрансляції*, що передбачає відтворення оригінальної події в деталях, але з деякими незначними відступами у кожному інциденті. У статті продемонстровано ретрансляцію за патерном *оригінал – транспонент*, де оригінал – це літературне першоджерело, підґрунтя для створення транспонентів шляхом утілення екстракомпозиційної реінтерпретації. Аналіз здійснено на підставі співставлення оригіналу з єдиним на сьогодні транспонентом. Усі адаптації, незалежно від кількості, складають разом з оригіналом єдину матрицю. І літературні, і кіно-інциденти, що складають подію нарративу *Nunc dimittis*, організовані через три мізансцени. Мізансцена при цьому тлумачиться як усі елементи, необхідні для втілення події. Запропоновані типи мізансцен налічують закритий, наскрізний та відкритий. Персонажі не покидають закритої мізансцени протягом її тривання, у наскрізній мізансцені дія розгортається навколо одного з персонажів, який з'являється на початку й зникає в кінці, відкрита мізансцена, відповідно, відкрита як ззовні (він може прийти), так і зсередини (може піти) для будь-якого залученого персонажа. Незначні відмінності між оригіналом і транспонентом стосуються символічного наповнення їхніх імен та дій, котрі не змінюють, проте розвивають ідею нарративу.

**Ключові слова:** адаптація, мізансцена, оригінал, ретрансляція, транспонент.

#### **З. А. Игина. Мизансцена в оригинале и адаптации: нарративная организация события в его внутреннем символизме.**

Статья посвящена изучению мизансцены как способа нарративной организации события в

рассказе *Nunc dimittis* и его одноименной экранизации. Событие в совокупности конкретных инцидентов интерпретируется как динамичная и пронизывающая весь нарратив конфронтация *реального и неизведанного*. Реальная сторона представлена фигурой молодого преступника, неизведанное воплощено женщиной-вампиром и ее смертным слугой. Литературный первоисточник сопоставлен с экранизацией с точки зрения интермедиального паттерна *аутентичной ретрансляции*. Паттерн предполагает детальное воспроизведение оригинального события с некоторыми незначительными отступлениями в инцидентах. В статье продемонстрирована ретрансляция по типу *оригинал* (литературный первоисточник) – *транспонент* (экранизация), где последний является результатом экстракомпозиционной реинтерпретации. Адаптации, независимо от количества, вместе с оригиналом представляют собой единую матрицу. И литературные, и киноинциденты в составе события нарратива *Nunc dimittis* разрешаются тремя мизансценами. Мизансцена определяется как совокупность элементов, необходимых для реализации события. Мизансцены обозначены как закрытая (с неизменным набором персонажей), сквозная (с центрированием одного персонажа, который приходит и уходит) и открытая для проходящих и уходящих персонажей. Незначительные различия между оригиналом и транспонентом касаются символического наполнения их имен и действий, не меняющих, но обогащающих идею нарратива.

**Ключевые слова:** адаптация, мизансцена, оригинал, ретрансляция, транспонент.

## 1. Introduction

The aim of the article is to explore different types of *mise en scène* in their chronological sequence making up a coherent narrative organisation of the main event in the literary story *Nunc dimittis* (Lee, 1986, pp. 309-329) and its screen version of the same name (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999).

The tasks concern explicating the event from the narrative stance with reference to both literary and filmic (cinematic) realms of narratology as well as to the theory of intermediality. The types of *mise en scène* are to be analysed according to their structure in the original and adaptation. Furthermore, separate linguistic units (related to *mystery factors* suggested in the article) distilling and generalising the messages of all *mise en scène* types are to be retrieved from the original and the screen version and studied in their symbolic contextual interpretation. To complete the latter task, the method of allegoresis is resorted to in terms of scrutinising the characters' names and the major symbols underlying their images. The object of the article is *mise en scène* in the original and adaptation; the subject relates to literary (verbal, linguistic) and cinematic (verbal and other than verbal) ways of representing the inner symbolism of the event (and the episodes) within each *mise en scène*.

The aim and scope of the paper lie within the previous studies of the author that develop the ideas of extracompositional intermediality (Wolf, 2002, pp. 18-21) in terms of *authentic* and *modified retranslation* as well as the original and *transponents* (Ihina, 2018a, pp. 86-87, 104).

Theoretically, the current work relies upon the scholarly sources within the theory of intermediality and film studies, especially in the sphere of organising the cinematic frame space (see Section 2 below).

The structure of the article has six parts that introduce the problem (Section 1); give its theoretical fundamentals (2); suggest and explain data and methods (3); formulate the results that may ground further research (4); provide an approach to possible discussion with previous theoretical research (5), and sum up the results (6). Section 5, to be more precise, correlates the theory of *mise en scène* as organisation of space in film with literary narrative organisation.

## 2. Theoretical fundamentals

The term *mise en scène* (from French – ‘putting on stage, or in the scene’), also known as *pro-filmic event* (Barbash & Taylor, 1997, p. 8) refers to the elements of setting perceived by the audience and constituting the event per se. *Mise en scène* involves all that might be noteworthy for the action (Gibbs, 2002, pp. 5, 10, 12; Wead & Lellis, 1981, p. 75). The event is a state of contradistinction that transpierces the whole narrative, a story about the event (Hoffmann, 2010, p. 5; Parker, 2008, p. 251; Porter Abbot, 2002, p. 12; Kearney, 2002, p. 130; Watts, 1981, p. 49), and sets *something / somebody* against another *something / somebody*. This opposition reveals the *Hegelian*

*particular purpose* (Hegel, 1975, p. 1088) founding and affecting the action in a certain narrative together with all elements that relate to it.

The event gets its expression in actual episodes (incidents) that represent the above-mentioned counterposition and its temporal stages (Danto, 1962, p. 146; Danto, 1991, p. 202). Besides, all elements of the event (for example, characters) are to be organised spatially in their interaction and coordination, alias put in the scene. The *scene* figuratively alludes to the internal set-up of the event with all its episodes. *Mise en scène*, in its turn, exposes the internal cause-effect logic and control of the event (including the reasons for the characters' comportment) (Buckland, 2015, pp. 32-34) in the original narrative as well as in its adaptations, or else in literary and profilmic reality (Buckland, 2003, p. 47).

Adapting the original may result in screen versions (films or TV shows), works of music (operas or musicals, musical ekphrasis, program music), graphical novels, and computer games (Ryan & Thon, 2014, p. 10). Works of literary fiction may adapt other works of literary fiction; original motion pictures (feature films) – other motion pictures (Genette, 1997, pp. 239, 355-356, 573). Adaptation lies in “taking possession of another’s story and filtering it” through another medium (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 18), i. e. remediating it (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, pp. 44-45). In such a way, the novel *Pride and prejudice and zombies* (Grahame-Smith, 2015) takes possession of the well-known *Pride and prejudice* by Austen; the feature film *The wolf man* (Waggner & Siodmak, 1941) filters *The wolfman* (Stuber et al., 2010).

*Medium* stands for “a kind of representation” (Wolf, 2007, p. 36) of some meaning that concentrates around the event and is important for a narrative as well as the reasons for its telling (Ryan, 2014, p. 25). Ways, functions, and outcomes of transgressing the borders of different media are explored by the theory of intermediality (Arvidson et al., 2007, p. 14-15; Clüver, 2007, p. 32; Rajewski, 2005, pp. 46-47).

If a primary medium gives way to another one, the shift between these media (medial territories) is an intermedial, or intersemiotic transposition (Englund, 2010, p. 70; Rajewski, 2005, p. 51; Clüver, 2007, p. 33), also known as extracompositional intermediality (Wolf, 2002, pp. 18-21), or else transmodalisation (Genette, 1997, pp. 237, 395). A novel may be transmodalised as a film, a film – as a novel, a drama – as an opera, and the event is free to go through whatever alterations at that (Clüver, 2007, p. 33).

Extracompositional intermediality presupposes the original (where a story first got its literary or another representation) and transponents – the story’s interpretations in other media. All adaptations make up the matrix of a certain narrative (Ihina, 2018a, p. 87). Besides, extracompositional intermediality differs from the intracompositional one, the latter being a part of a certain composition, i.e.; a feature film or an opera are multimedial complexes, or intermedial fusions (Rajewsky, 2005, p. 51; Wolf, 2002, pp. 22-23, 28-29) that include text, visual effects, and music. A variant of intracompositional intermediality – *explicit and implicit intermedial reference* – refers, as the term suggests, to other media or intermedial works of art, literature, cinema, etc. by systemic or individual allusions. The systemic one presupposes some complex, such as a literary genre, the individual one mentions a certain work (Rajewsky, 2005, p. 53).

The implicit reference is also known as *evocation* that presupposes rendering the effects of one medium by the effects of another one (as in the case of ekphrasis), and *formal imitation* that emulates the form of the original (the case of program music). The explicit reference (or intermedial thematization) includes a well-known allusion or names the work it cites directly (Wolf, 2002, pp. 23-26). In the feature film *Only lovers left alive* (Thomas et al., 2013), the portraits of men of letters (Poe, Wilde, Baudelaire, Twain, etc.) are regularly on camera. In *Addiction* (Holmes et al., 1995), the main female character is keen on quoting Santayana, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard. In *Byzantium* (Englehardt et al., 2012), the principal male personages are named after Polidori’s and Byron’s characters.

To retranslate a literary narrative into a filmic one, interpreters (such as film directors or writers) separate texts on paper or other data medium from filmic frames – time-fixed moveable images on screen accompanied by sound (Verstraten, 2009, pp. 12-13). Besides these interpreters, there is also the viewer who correlates with the reader and is a reconstructor (Chatman, 1999, pp. 127-129; Horstkotte, 2009, pp. 171, 186) of a retranslated narrative.

Transitions among frames reproduce narration in film. Time, space, and causality (shifting frames in succession) make up the basic triad of filmic narrative (Verstraten, 2009, pp. 15-16) and hence show a direct relationship with classical Aristotelian poetics (Aristotle, 2006, pp. 29-32). In contrast to the literary narrator who tells a story, the filmic one shows images (Chatman, 1990, p. 134; Verstraten, 2009, pp. 51-53).

Sometimes the time in filmic narratives stops to embody the *temps mort* technique: nothing seems to happen, but the absence of action is meaningful for the event's message (Verstraten, 2009, p. 17-18). In the feature film *Week woman* (Grou & Fox, 1999), the main character's personality changes every new week (a *week—weak* pun). A quiet romantic housewife may turn into a maniac on Monday. As a final point, another character murders her to wait until the end of the week when she is supposed to be reborn. The *temps mort* frames show him sitting over the dead body. Overall, they may contribute not only to the message, but also to the general frame organization of space (a part of the film structure) including objects, characters, and locations (Chatman, 1999, p. 51; Verstraten, 2009, pp. 59-70).

Besides the frame space, the structure involves (Verstraten, 2009, pp. 73-74, 84, 115-118, 179-180):

- 1) characters' positioning (up, down, in the foreground, etc.) judging by their significance;
- 2) props indicating the image and typecast of a character, e.g. a femme fatale wears red;
- 3) location;
- 4) the general colour (bright, soft, dark).
- 5) the point of view identified by the camera work: *iris-in* (with the camera moving from the sides of a frame to the central object); *plot directed* (moving toward the object); *varied* (showing different characters); *focalised* (watching with the eyes of a certain character).

All these structural elements are taken into account while retranslating a certain narrative into the cinematic medium. Still, in the emerging transponents, some of them may be either left intact or modified (intensified, reduced, or even totally reconsidered) (Ihina, 2018a, pp. 104-105).

1. An authentic retranslation reproduces the original event in another medium with no or minor changes and may be detailed and reduced. The former one preserves the plot and keeps all the original characters and objects as, for example, in the feature film *The Limehouse Golem* (Karlsen et al., 2017) based on Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994). The reduced one may drop selected plotlines, characters or other details that make the original recognisable, e.g., *Hannibal* (De Laurentiis et al., 2001), the screen version of the novel by Harris (1999), eliminates the plotline with Margot Verger whose part in the story is played by another character.

2. A modified retranslation reconsiders the original in terms of *transformation* (i.e. affecting the outer form) or *transmutation* (affecting the content). In transformed retranslations, the changes concern locales, characters' names, etc. Thus, in *Pact with the devil* (Carvalho et al., 2004), reenacting the famous novel *The picture of Dorian Gray*, the event unfolds in modern times. In transmuted retranslations, the changes affect the content and the general message. In *The hunger* (Shepherd et al., 1983), the screen version of Strieber's book of the same name (Strieber, 2001), the main character Sarah stays alive instead of dying a sacrificial death.

Therefore, the term *mise en scène* denotes the elements' complex constituting the narrative event, the latter being a sequential change of states based on the internal logic of a given story and its evolution. Adaptation takes place while transferring the original (a narrative in its initial – literary or other – form) into another medium, thus making it a retranslated transponent. The medium is a kind of representing the event by the effects pertaining to that particular kind, such as

visualisation and music in film and text in literature. The original and all its transponents make up the matrix of a certain narrative. Transference into another medium is studied in terms of intermediality that may be either extra- or intracompositional.

The structure of filmic narratives is different from their literary originals. It presumes, *inter alia*, not only characters' relations and a specific point of view, but also the frame space, props, and the general colour that may suggest either some mood adopted for representing a scene or a hidden message.

The event transferred from another medium may undergo an authentic or modified retranslation.

### 3. Methods and data

The author suggests the term *decryption* – *dē-* is a prefix denoting separation and absence, *crypticus* is 'hidden, secret, covert, concealed' (Klein, 1966, pp. 379, 404) – to designate the method employed to achieve the aim of the article. It is based on detecting and categorising implicit information in those fragments of the analysed narrative that need commentary and interpretation to expose the message of the whole story. An operational term to denote these fragments is *loci suspensi* – 'the places of suspense'.

Suspense here stands for a feeling of something "alarming but oddly consoling" (Ackroyd, 2011, p. 4) that accompanies the event and endows it with the adventurous air of a mysterious conundrum having a tragic or perilous supernatural tint. Categorising refers to, for example, the names of characters treated independently of their actions, but complementing them symbolically.

The method of decryption combines hermeneutics with allegorese.

Philosophical Hermeneutics presumes that "a text yields understanding only when what is said in the text begins to find expression in the interpreter's own language" (Gadamer, 2008, pp. 57, 209), i. e., the emergent meaning is co-created by the source of information and the interpreter. Allegorese is a medieval exegetical method used to deal with clarifying unclear loci – obscure passages (Augustin, 2009, p. 41; Jones, 1995, p. 79; Reuling, 2006, p. 82; Thiselton, 1992, p. 159) in sacred texts. It consisted in discovering their (the texts') "inner voices via which individual linguistic parts found their totality" (Strauch, 2001, pp. 92-93) and "the thought was formed by the intellect as an image of reality" (Minor, 2006, p. 9). Therefore, decryption facilitates eliciting the message by explaining hidden information in a narrative.

The methodology of the article also relies upon the theory of intermediality and specifies it in the extracompositional aspect (see Section 2 above), for the material the author works with is the narrative *Nunc dimittis* realised within the original—transponent matrix, the original being the literary story, and the transponent is its screen version of the same name.

The analysis of *mise en scène* with reference to the chosen narrative is also suggested in the article and sustained by the works in narrative as well as cinema studies (see Section 2 above).

### 4. Results

Being the fulcrum of a certain episode, *mise en scène* is a mode of arranging a number of images that serve to imitate, model some informative, emotional, and aesthetic integrity that translates the idea to the addressee (Bellour, 2000, p. 25; Burch, 2011, pp. 48, 52). Therefore, the episode is made of all participants, their purposes, confronting statuses (weaker, stronger, etc.), mutual assessment, and environment at issue.

In a literary narrative (in fiction), all these elements get some linguistic expression, either detailed or not depending upon their significance; in a cinematic (film) narrative the elements are realised verbally (via the characters' speech or the narrator's voice) as well as visually.

All narrative types of *mise en scène* may split up into three categories:

1. The enclosed *mise en scène* keeps the participants inside up to its end, *ab ovo ad finem*, with them moving up to the next *mise en scène*.

2. The pass-through *mise en scène* links to one of the characters ushered into a *mise en scène* by other characters or appearing there by himself to disappear at the end of the *mise en scène*.

3. In the open *mise en scène*, the characters take turns in coming and going; they may either stay (but not all of them at the same time) or leave at the end of the scene.

The gothic story *Nunc dimittis* (Lee, 1986, pp. 309-329) belongs to a literary tradition associated with the supernatural and conditioned by the presence of some metaphysical evil (Snodgrass, 2005, p. 306). Together with its screen version of the same name (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999), the story sets the main event (“confronting death” in one form or another) within the system of four episodes and three characters. All three are highly enigmatic and symbolic in names and nature.

Interpretations of their names contribute to understanding the event beyond the superficial content of each *mise en scène*. Besides, there are various explanations of death, even up to its treatment as some kind of life. For example, death may be discussed in a dialogue revealing that one of the characters knows about his near death (underlined below in both illustrative examples), the other asks whether he rejoices at it (boldfaced in both examples), and the former (in the screen version) even answers positively (*I am very glad. Yes, very glad*):

(1) **The original**

*“You say you are tired. I know how it is. To be so tired, and unable to rest. It is a terrible thing.”*

*“But, Princess,” said the old man quietly, “it is more than this. I am dying.” (...)*

*“Dying? Can this be? You are sure?” (...)*

*“Yes, Princess.”*

*“Oh (...) **are you glad?**”*

*He seemed a little embarrassed. Finally he said:*

*“Forgive me, Princess, but I am very glad. Yes, very glad.” (Lee, 1986, p. 309).*

**The screen version**

*“You move so slowly tonight. You must be tired. I know how it is to be weary and unable to rest. Just a terrible thing.”*

*“It is more than that. I am dying.”*

*“Oh, **are you glad?**” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:03:24 – 00:03:54).*

The measures of life and death are so obscure and fuzzy that fall within the principle of narrative antinomy typical of gothic narratives. It allows treating the same phenomenon or character as something else and different, while identifying something different – as the same in one context (Ihina, 2018b, pp. 289-290). Simultaneously, death is a physical end of being, gaining new qualities, casting off the old skin in imitating the amphibia, and getting several decades younger by taking somebody’s death upon one’s self.

In *Nunc dimittis* the event is based on specific circumstances that enable the encounter of two opposing forces – the known and the unknown, the latter mostly concerning the supernatural (Ihina, 2018a, p. 82). The character of the known side is a thief, murderer, and gigolo named Snake. The female vampire Darejan Draculas and her ranfield Vasyelu Gorin (Vassu) represent the unknown. Ranfield is a common noun, an eponym that originates from Stoker’s *Dracula* to denote a vampire’s mortal servant.

Ranfields possess inhuman physical strength, long lifespan (of several hundred years), and the power over insects and animals (see, for example, Sweeney & Almereyda, 1994).

All characters in *Nunc dimittis* cooperate to implement the initiation ritual that lies in initiating the new ranfield chosen by the present one and accepted subsequently by the vampire.

Darejan is not a typical vampire. She belongs to a vampiric clan whose representatives can live for centuries, wither away, and get all visual markers of the old age, but are capable of

rejuvenating if a mortal drinks their blood. Such a vampire is like a doctor who recuperates by healing. Besides, the mortal does not transmute into a vampire, but acquires useful superhuman abilities. By the beginning of the described event, Vassu has been serving Darejan for several centuries, but is already tired of life, ill, and has to find a substitute.

Death manifests itself in four episodes that constitute the event.

In the first one, Vassu meets Snake – the herald of his death, for if the vampire approves of a new ranfield, the old one is to die. For Snake, death in this episode is Vassu who can easily kill with his bare hands. In the second episode, Snake skates on thin ice in Darejan’s house while being tested for service. In the third one, all characters have to make sure they are ready to face imminent changes: Vassu is to die, Snake – to be the indirect reason for it, Darejan – to accept Vassu’s death and save Snake. In the fourth one, the ultimate physical death is in store for Vassu, a fatal wound and regeneration – for Snake, rejuvenation – for Darejan.

Thus, the *mise en scène* system organises characters in their interaction to translate the message of the main event into its episodes. Organisation and interaction depend upon the types of *mise en scène* (enclosed, pass-through, and open) where the characters act. The environment surrounding the characters inside each *mise en scène* also works for the message.

#### 4.1. The enclosed *mise en scène*

**Episode 1.** Vassu meets Snake in the street.

Vassu figures as *the old man*, Snake – as *the old man’s attacker*.

- (2) *The old man (...) stepped on and into an alleyway that ran between the high buildings. The steps followed him (...) Water trickled along the brickwork beside him, and the noise of the city was lost. Abruptly, a hand was on the back of his neck, a capable hand, warm, sure and vital, not harming him yet, almost the touch of a lover. “That’s right, old man. (...) Let me have you wallet.” – “Yes,” he faltered (...) and slipped from the sure and merciless grip like water (...) flinging away – there was a whirl of movement. The old man’s **attacker slammed against the wet grey wall and rolled down it. He lay on the rainy debris of the alley floor, and stared up, too surprised to look surprised.** (...) Even now, even dying, he was terrible in his strength (Lee, 1986, p. 312).*

The characters of the first episode are Snake (on the side of the known) and Vassu (on the unknown side). They stay up to the end of the scene and move on to the next one. Their confrontation is literal: Snake tries to rob Vassu (to take his wallet), and Vassu answers in the ranfield’s manner of a stronger being. Snake’s intention unveils by the description of his hand (underlined above).

The adjectives *capable, warm, sure, and vital* show that Snake is sure of himself (it must be not the first time he robs people), and his first remark addressed to Vassu (*That’s right, old man. Let me have you wallet*) is expressed in a polite request. Vassu prefers to answer back by such an unexpected crushing blow that Snake cannot even be surprised. The pun *too surprised to look surprised* (boldfaced above) expresses the principle of narrative antinomy. The young man never thought of anything like that with reference to elderly people.

The power of the blow shows through its consequences (boldfaced above): Snake was *slammed against the wall and rolled down it into the rainy debris of the alley floor*. The verbs *slammed* and *rolled* may denote a sudden noise made by Vassu’s stroke, still more out of place after Snake’s quiet and polite quasi-request. However, it is not accidental that Snake *rolled down into the rainy debris of the alley floor*: the noun *floor* does not specify the floor per se (pavestone, asphalt, etc.), but identifies the position (see Section 2). Snake finds himself lower than Vassu, i.e., inferior to him. The noun *debris* and the verb *lie* in the past tense (*lay on the rainy debris*) show how much lower that position is. Besides, the debris is *rainy, wet*, and thus sticks better to Snake as debris of another kind. In contrast to him, Vassu looks like Saint George, the Dragon’s Victor.

The names of both characters intensify the contrast.

1. *Snake* is, actually, a serpent. It crawls on / along the ground. The noun *snake* originates from the word *snaca* and denotes a creeping animal (Klein, 1966, p. 1464). In Modern English, *snake* may refer to ‘a malicious person’, ‘a secret enemy’, ‘a traitor’ (Thompson, 1993, p. 863).

The cultural symbolism of *snake* is diverse and multipolar, positive and negative. It is a symbol of immortality, regeneration, wisdom, blind passion, remedy, poison, protection, destruction, and the Tempter himself (Battistini, 2005, p. 156; Cooper, 1987, pp. 146-147). The snake’s qualities are mysteriousness, intuition, unexpectedness, perfidy, exquisiteness, guile, power, initiation source, rejuvenation, material and spiritual potential (Cooper, 1987, p. 147). The examples below demonstrate that Snake's internal power impressed and attracted Vassu. Finally, it determined his choice.

Vassu’s attitude to Snake makes the serpent's ambivalence evident and yet again exposes the principle of narrative antinomy at work. On the one hand, the old ranfield sees and accepts the internal power (some spiritual potential) of Snake; on the other hand, he shows his open disdain to him by expressing surprise that he can read (underlined below) and indicating that the young man cannot speak correctly (boldfaced below):

- (3) “Can you even read?” snapped Vasyelu (Lee, 1986, p. 321).  
 “Her name is Darejan Draculas. (...) Another branch.” – “A vampire?” – “Do you believe in such things?” said the old man. “You should, living as you do, preying as you do.” – “I never,” said Snake, “pray.” – “Prey,” said the old man. “Prey upon. You cannot even speak your own language.” (Lee, 1986, p. 316).

In the screen version, the last example (its equivalent in the feature film) has a bit different interpretation: the ways of life lead by Snake and Darejan are recognised as similar (boldfaced below):

- (4) “Her name is Darejan Draculas. You recognise the name, I see. It is another branch of the family.” – “Is she a vampire?” – “You lead similar lives preying on people in the night.” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:12:07 – 00:12:28)

2. Vassu’s surname is *Gorin* that etymologically means “from the family of Gor”, where *Gor* is a derived name developed from *George* (Ganzhina, 2001, p. 135). *Vasyelu* must be a distorted variant of Basil, stemming from the Greek word βασιλεύς – a regal personality (Liddell & Scott, 1961, p. 309). Therefore, Vasyelu Gorin seems to be an aristocrat by spirit (boldfaced below), the noble descendant of George. Introducing himself to Snake, he gives his full name (underlined):

- (5) He had become **an aristocrat** and sounded it (...). “Get up. (...) Up. I will not hit you again.” (...). “Yes. And you could, couldn't you, granddad.”  
 “My name,” said the old man, “is Vasyelu Gorin. I am the father to none.” (Lee, 1986, p. 313).

Only Darejan calls him by the short form *Vassu*. This one word turns a basileus into a servant, for this name (invented by the author of the story) may refer to the Latin form *vassus* (servant), and this form in its turn has a Celtic origin: *gwas* – a youth, servant (Welsh), *gewaz* – a servant, vassal (Breton), *fuss* (Irish) – a servant (Klein, 1966, p. 1966).

Once again, the principle of narrative antinomy allows contaminating an aristocrat and a servant, a dragon-fighter and dragon-bearer (Ophiuchus) in the same character. In the screen version, Snake has a gun and attacks Vassu aggressively by not only touching his neck from behind, but turning the latter to face him. He is more brutal than in the original and his speech is abusive (boldfaced below):

- (6) “Give me your wallet”  
 “I have no wallet”.  
 “Don’t lie to me, **asshole**, or I will hurt you.” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:08:36 – 00:08:55).

However, Vassu is not afraid. He throws the attacker on the heap of boxes, lets him get to his feet and even pick up the gun: “Get up. Is this yours? Take it” (00:09:17). Instead of the hand, the instrument of influence (the gun) in the feature film is more visible and impressive.

Vassu’s plans for Snake cannot be clear to the young man at the beginning of their relations, so the old ranfield only promises to buy him food (underlined below in both examples) because he will need him (boldfaced). The pronoun *something* (in the literary original) and three simple sentences *You’ll soon find out. Don’t worry. You will be rewarded* (in the feature film) create a mysterious atmosphere.

(7) **The original**

“Get up. You attempted to rob me because you are poor, having no work and no wish for work. I will buy you food, now.”

“Why?” The young man continued to lie, as if at ease, on the ground.

“Because **I want something from you.**” (Lee, 1986, p. 313).

**The screen version**

“You look hungry. Come with me. I have a meal await.” – “A meal?” – “You do eat, don’t you?” – “What do you want?” – “**You’ll soon find out. Don’t worry. You will be rewarded.**” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:08:00 – 00:10:10).

The characters in the *mise en scène* evaluate each other in view of their individual prospects, and their opinions open up in the internal monologues. The narrator, in his turn, also evaluates them (boldfaced): *Even now, even dying, he was terrible in his strength* (p. 313) – the word *terrible* shows the narrator’s attitude to Vassu’s powers. The old man wants to find, though intuitively, a reliable successor, and his search is based on a numinous talent for recognising potential ranfields on a hunch.

Some subjective impressions of such a hunch are described below (boldfaced):

- (8) *In the small café where he had paused to sit and drink coffee, vague shapes came and went. Of no interest to him. No use to her. Throughout the morning, there had been nothing to alert him. **He would know. He would know, as he had known it of himself.** (...) He had known for a year before that he would serve her. (...) He had kneeled, and stammered something. But **she had simply looked at him quietly and said: “I know. You are welcome.”**” (Lee, 1986, p. 312).*

In the screen version, Vassu expresses his feelings in terms of *the anger in footsteps* (boldfaced) that remind him of his own story (underlined):

- (9) *He followed me in the street. I thought **the anger in his footsteps** the same anger I felt when I ran down bleeding down that path those years ago* (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:19:04 – 00:19:25).

Some unclear features ascribed to Snake as a potential worthy ranfield exemplify the contextual embodiment of another narrative principle of gothic stories – *diffused reference* – that makes a character, thing, or phenomenon ambivalent, obscure, and mysterious (Ihina, 2018b, pp. 290-292). Thus, recognising a new ranfield needs an ability to identify a phantasmal ‘aura’ around him that

signifies his near violent death (boldfaced below). The old ranfield recognises his successor by a metaphysical sign (*stigma, mark*).

The meaning of this mark is shown in the narrative through visual and olfactory “channels”, such as spotting the leopard-coloured eyes (in sparse print below), and feeling a peculiar scent (underlined).

- (10) *He had heard her name, and known he would eventually come to serve her. **The way in which he had known, both for himself and for the young man called Snake, had been in a presage of violent death.** All the while, searching through the city, there had been **no one with that stigma upon him, that mark.** Until, in the alley, the warm hand gripped his neck, until he looked into the leopard-coloured eyes. Then Vasyelu saw the mark, smelled the scent of it like singed bone (Lee, 1986, p. 326).*

Another mark concerns *something* that does not have a name but is evident at once, even while Snake is lying on the ground (underlined below).

- (11) *Swiftly, deliberately, the old man studied the young one. Something struck home instantly. Even sprawled, the adversary was **peculiarly graceful, the grace of enormous physical coordination.** The **touch of the hand, also, impervious and certain** – there was strength here, too. And now **the eyes.** Yes, **the eyes were steady, intelligent, and with a curious lambency, an innocence** (...) The young man grinned. The humour flitted through his eyes. In the dull light of the alley, **they were the colour of leopards** – not the eyes of leopards, but **their pelts** (Lee, 1986, p. 313).*

The portrait of the defeated *adversary* is made up of language units (boldfaced above) that help to see how a charming rogue transforms into a Byronic character – a witty, confident young predator having an inborn aristocratic skill to look calm and reputable in spite of the real way of life.

The adjectives *graceful, impervious, certain* (to describe Snake's behaviour), *steady, intelligent* (to describe Snake's eyes) as well as the nouns *lambency, innocence* (to describe Snake's gaze) are used to make an overall assessment. Snake's eyes compared to a leopard's skin (***the colour of leopards*** – not the eyes, but ***their pelts***) expose a predator (underlined below) that can disguise himself and, if necessary, change skins (boldfaced):

- (12) *He had learned how to be a prince, he was **a gigolo with a closet full of skins to put on;** now and then the speckled leopard eyes, searching, wary, would give him away (Lee, 1986, pp. 313-314).*

Vassu seems to read Snake's life from his face, and just a few verbs and nouns are needed to identify (boldfaced below) who and what (vampire, murderer) that cute swindler is and what he does in his life – steals and practises sexual vampirism.

- (13) *The old man looked at the young man called Snake, and knew that (...) here was one who had **stolen and whored, and stolen again** when the slack bodies slept, both male and female, exhausted by **the sexual vampirism he had practised on them**, drawing their misguided souls out through their pores as later he **would draw the notes from purse and pocket.** Yes, a **vampire.** Maybe a **murderer**, too (Lee, 1986, p. 313).*

Therefore, Vassu has found his substitute, and this choice makes it possible to extend the meaning of ranfield in gothic stories. A number of nouns and verbs used to denote it may be named as follows: *gigolo, murderer, vampire* (with the attribute *sexual*); *stolen, whored*, i.e. this is a

generalised individual with no morals. He can easily worm his way into somebody's confidence, for he has features regarded as positive in other contexts (*graceful, impervious, certain, intelligent*) but uses them for evil, rather than good purposes. Besides, a vampire's servant has a specific *stigma* felt by other ranfields and vampires.

The setting of the enclosed *mise en scène* of *Nunc dimittis* includes certain elements important for the event and getting their realisation in the narrative at the level of separate episodes.

The elements fall into three categories: phenomena (on the side of the known), noumena (on the side of the unknown), and pheno-noumena (combined elements) (Ihina, 2018b, pp. 223-232).

Phenomena:

- 1) *an alleyway that ran between the high buildings;*
- 2) *the rainy debris of the alley floor;*
- 3) *the wet grey wall;*
- 4) Snake's hand (*a hand was on the back of his neck, a capable hand, warm, sure and vital, not harming him yet, almost the touch of a lover*);

Noumena:

- 1) *a presage of violent death, stigma, mark;*
- 2) *the scent of singed bone;*
- 3) Vassu's strength (*he was terrible in his strength*).

Pheno-noumena – peculiar eyes (*they were the colour of leopards – not the eyes of leopards, but their pelts*) that have something (*something struck home instantly*) showing a ranfield's nature.

#### 4.2. The pass-through *mise en scène*

##### Episode 2. Snake meets Darejan.

Vassu brings Snake to Darejan for assessment.

Snake makes the *mise en scène* a pass-through one, for it is he who comes and goes.

Vassu is a speechless observer (boldfaced below) and plays the role of a focaliser (see Section 2).

- (14) *The old man came into the room, placing his black-garbed body, **like a shadow**, by the door, which he left now standing wide; the old man watched Snake (Lee, 1986, p. 317); Seeing him from the back, Vasyelu was able to observe all the play (...) yet, not seeing the face, the eyes, was unsatisfactory; the old man shifted his position, **edged shadowlike** along the room's perimeter, until he had gained a better vantage (Ibid). The old man was only **a shadow in a corner** (Lee, 1986, p. 319).*

The name *Darejan* is of a Persian origin and alludes to the name of Rustaveli's character from *The knight in the panther's (also leopard's) skin*. The onym may be interpreted as *the soul of a pearl or a generous gift*. "The soul, living spirit" is the second part of the name (*jan*), and the first one (*gift*) means either something given, presented in great quantities (rain, milk), or denotes nacreous jewellery. Besides, the collective noun *jan* refers to mythological entities of Persian mythology: demons or representatives of preadamite races (Steingass, 2005, pp. 352, 506).

In view of the allusion to *The knight in the panther's skin*, the description of Snake's eyes – *the colour of leopards' pelts* (Lee, 1986, p. 313) – takes on a different connotation.

Interpreters rendered the original word ვეპხო (also known as the male name *Vepkho*) as a tiger, ounce, panther, and leopard. In search of his beloved woman Nestan-Darejan, the character named Tariel wears the skin of *vepkho*, for he thinks Darejan shares similar features with this feline animal (Stevenson, 1977, p. 27). In terms of gothic tradition, this kind of behaviour may be treated as an occult ritual practice of sympathetic magic (Ihina, 2018b, p. 234). When Snake casts off his skin at the end of the story, he comes to combine similarities: if Darejan is in person beside Tariel, so he does not need the skin anymore.

The yellow eyes are pheno-noumenal. Vassu recognised them as a sign of magical qualities – and Snake got an opportunity to find his real nature and his Darejan.

The family name *Draculas* is a direct allusion to Vlad Dracula – the ruler of Wallachia and the most famous literary vampire. The name *Dracula*, well known as the form of the Nominative case within the paradigm *Dracula – Dracul’s*, is, however, the form of Genitive. *Dracula* here means ‘of Dracul, Dracul’s’. Thus, the number of Draculs duplicates. *Dracul* stems from the nickname worn by the historical Dracula’s father and means ‘devil’ or ‘dragon’. There may be variants of the name: *Dracole, Draculya, Dracol, Draculea, Draculios, Draculia, Tracol*. In Modern Romanian, the noun *dracul* still means ‘devil’. Another interpretation is connected with “The Dragon’s Order” – a chivalric order for nobles organised in 1408 by the king of Hungary to fight the outside aggression of the Ottomans as well as to face the ruckus of unstable home affairs. In 1431, Dracul was knighted and appointed in charge to defend the borders of Transylvania. Besides this virtuous cause, the Order oppressed the powerless natives, and superstitious peasants perceived the dragon on the Order’s flags as a clear sign of the devil. As for the son of the Order’s head, he had two nicknames: *Tepes* ‘the impaler’ and *Dracula* ‘the devil’s or dragon’s son’ (Florescu & McNally, 1994, pp. 8-9; Welsh, 2007, pp. 166-167).

Darejan’s surname (*Draculas*) may be an anglicised Genitive form of *Dracula* (Dracula’s), i. e., not of the dragon-devil’s kin, but that of the Stoker’s character. The name alone makes Darejan unique. In this fiction world, though she belongs to the same family as the notorious literary vampire, the woman personifies a pearl oyster (*margaritifera*). A terrifying dragon (dracul) has a soul of a pearl and is capable of endowing anyone with a long life and inhuman powers. The ‘proselyte’ does not transform into an undead at that, but has to face enslaving, for a new ranfield is to work for a vampire until his own dying day. As soon as the old servant feels his coming death, he finds a young candidate to be further approved by the vampire. The ceremony of approval (admission) is symbolic for all involved. This is a solemn occasion and requires fine garments (boldfaced below) and jewellery (underlined).

- (15) *She had been preparing herself. As she rose to her feet, he beheld **the red satin dress, the jewelled silver crucifix at her throat, the trickle of silver from her ears.** On the thin hands, the great rings throbbed their sable colours. <...> She was **magnificent**. Gaunt, elderly, her beauty lost, her heart dulled, yet **magnificent, wondrous** (Lee, 1986, p. 316).*

Vassu is stunned by his lady’s looks though she is aged and tired of life. He sees her as *magnificent* and *wondrous* (boldfaced and underlined above).

At first sight the initial meeting with a potential ranfield looks like a test that must reveal his nature. The choice (it has already been mentioned) is intuitive.

In this mise en scène, the dialogue between Darejan and Snake starts as a sort of business talk. Snake formulates Darejan’s plans the way he understands them – as *the bargain*.

Accordingly, he must make the client happy (boldfaced below) and get paid for it (underlined).

- (16) “Good evening,” *the Vampire* said to Snake. (...)  
 “There are so many valuable things here. What shall I take? What about the silver cross you’re wearing?” (...)  
 “An heirloom. I am rather fond of it. I do not recommend you should try to take that.” (...)  
 “But **I thought, if I did what you wanted, if I made you happy – I could have whatever I liked. Wasn’t that the bargain?**”  
 “And how would you propose to make me happy?” (Lee, 1986, p. 317).

Vassu, the focaliser, is engulfed by mixed feelings of fascination and disgust (boldfaced below) as he recalls the touch of Snake’s hand in the alley. The adjectives *electric* and *sensitive* suggest his thinking of him as of a surgeon or an artist (underlined).

- (17) *Snake went close to her; he prowled about her, very slowly. **Disgusted, fascinated**, the old man watched him. Snake (...) slipped his left hand along her shoulder, sliding from the red satin to the dry skin of her throat. Vasyelu remembered the touch of the hand, electric, and so sensitive, the fingers of an artist or a surgeon (Lee, 1986, p. 318).*

In the screen version, the beginning is different. Vassu is not present while Darejan and Snake are talking, and Snake starts his part of the dialogue with commenting on Vassu in his absence (boldfaced below). Darejan tells about the conditions that made Vassu serve her – she saved his life (underlined), i. e., Vassu also had that ranfield's mark, the aura of death. Besides, the beginning of the screen version has a direct question whether Snake wants to be a servant (in sparse print below) though Darejan and Snake treat the nouns *servant* and *service* differently in this mise en scène: Darejan – as the onus of her ranfield, Snake – as paid sex.

- (18) ***“Pretty weird old guy. Has he been with you long?”**  
 “Very long. When he was your age, he was the same as you. A thief. I remember he was being chased on the village road close to death. The town's people would have torn him to pieces if they'd caught him, but I was waiting. And because I was waiting he did not die. Why do you laugh?”  
 “I don't know anybody who has a servant. I didn't know they existed anymore.”  
 “Could you be one? A servant.”  
 “Yeah, sure. I mean tha's why I am here for, right? Service.” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:14:06 – 00:15:48).*

However, Darejan does not think of Snake in terms of his plans, so she remains serene (boldfaced below). These plans cannot make her happy (underlined). Still, Snake insists and even promises to let her drink his blood (boldfaced and underlined).

- (19) ***The Vampire never changed.** She said: “No. You will not make me happy, my child.”  
 “Oh.” Snake said into her ear. “You can't be certain. If you like, if you really like, **I'll let you drink my blood.**” (Lee, 1986, p. 318).*

His permission is, of course, ridiculous, and Darejan decides to frighten him.

The next example demonstrates how she uses her power of voice. The focaliser (Vassu) compares it to *flame from finished coal*. The essence of this paranormal power does not have an exact name but is *something dormant yet intensely powerful*. Vassu cannot say what this something is, but he knows and feels that it is frightening (boldfaced below).

- (20) *The Vampire laughed. **It was frightening.** Something dormant yet intensely powerful seemed to come alive in her as she did so, like flame from finished coal (Lee, 1986, p. 318).*

The fear in this mise en scène expresses the opposition between the known and the unknown where the latter is the frightening part, and the former – the frightened one. The adjective *intrinsic* refers to both sides. Some kind of natural order is at issue here: Snake has to be afraid (boldfaced), Darejan has to frighten (underlined).

- (21) *The old man saw **fear** in the leopard-yellow eyes, **a fear as intrinsic to the being of Snake as to cause fear was intrinsic to the being of the Vampire** (Lee, 1986, p. 318).*

Then Darejan says what she thinks of Snake. He is a thief and murderer (underlined) with no sanity or fastidiousness (boldfaced), who thinks he will deceive *some senile hag*:

- (22) *“What do you think I am,” she said, “some senile hag greedy to rub her scaly flesh against your smoothness; some hag you can, **being without sanity or fastidiousness**, (...) murder, tearing the gems from her fingers with your teeth? Am I that? (Lee, 1986, p. 318).*

In the screen version, she calls herself a perverted hag (boldfaced) and a senile witch (underlined), but demands to answer who he is (*Tell me who you are!*) if she is reduced to all these names. The effect of her voice is expressed by audio-visual means.

- (23) *Who do you think I am? A **perverted hag** waiting to lick up your youth? That’s what you see – a senile witch waiting for the flesh between your thighs? What am I? Tell me who you are! (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:16:55 – 00:17:16).*

Snake finally gets her real aim. The young man is thrown out of his impudence, for he sees with his own eyes that the world is more complicated than he thought. There are supernatural old men with iron fists (boldfaced) and women who burn, but are never burnt and are as dangerous as razor blades (underlined).

- (24) *For an instant there was an air of panic about him. He was accustomed to the characteristics of the world. **Old men** creeping through rainy alleys **could not strike mighty blows with their iron hands**. Women were moths that burnt, but did not burn, tones of tinsel and pleading, not razor blades. Snake shuddered all over (...) darted about and bolted (...) The Vampire made no move. Like a marvellous waxwork she dominated the room, red and white and black (Lee, 1986, pp. 318-319).*

Darejan rules the situation. Vassu thinks she *dominates the room*.

Snake, in his turn, faces two oppositions in his mind: 1) *burnt moths* vs **women that burn**; 2) *tones of tinsel and pleading* vs **razor blades**. These oppositions shatter Snake’s world so that he shudders, panics (in sparse print above) and flees (in sparse underlined print above). He changes his opinion about the old woman. In the screen version, the fright and escape are expressed visually – by *reaction shots*, i.e. the frames demonstrating attitudes (Chatman, 1990, p. 134; Verstraten, 2009, pp. 51-53).

Thus, the participants involved in the *mise en scène* are Snake, Darejan, and Vassu. The latter is the focaliser who reveals the purposes and powers of the characters as well as their mutual assessment.

Snake’s purpose (financial profit) is clear from the very start and is verbalised as follows:

- (25) *“There are so many valuable things here. What shall I take?”  
“If I made you happy – I could have whatever I liked” (Lee, 1986, p. 317).*

Darejan sees a criminal in Snake, and her assessment shows through the act of deterrence realised as her magic voice. She knows that he will be frightened. The explanation of his fear reminds of a logical maxim: *to fear is as intrinsic to the being of Snake as to cause fear is intrinsic to the being of the Vampire*. The voice is described by expressive means and shows Snake’s change of attitude to Darejan:

- 1) *like flame from finished coal* – simile;
- 2) *women that burn and are razor blades* – metaphors;

3) *something dormant yet intensely powerful* – the indefinite pronoun *something* and the epithets *dormant* and *powerful* that intensify its indefiniteness and create the effect of mystery.

The *mise en scène* is based on the ritual of approval and demonstration of power.

After the demonstration, Snake is upset into panic (has the *air of panic*). The verbs proving his state denote the actions of a frightened person: *shuddered, darted about, bolted*.

Snake's timorous fuss (the *air of panic*) is opposed to Darejan's imperturbability (cool air): *The Vampire made no move. Like a marvellous waxwork she dominated the room.*

The setting of the *mise en scène* includes the following phenomena:

- 1) *the room*;
- 2) the focaliser's place (*by the door*);
- 3) *valuable things* in the room;
- 4) Darejan's dress and jewellery (*the red satin dress, silver from her ears, the great rings*), her skin and hair (*dry skin of her throat, black hair*);
- 5) Snake's fingers (*fingers of an artist or a surgeon*);
- 6) an allusion to blood that infuriated Darejan (*I will let you drink my blood*).

Besides, there is a thing mentioned in both versions that bears a specific symbolic importance – *the jewelled silver crucifix at Darejan's throat*. Snake sets his eye on it almost at once and is insolent enough to ask for it as for a welcome gift: *What shall I take? What about the silver cross you're wearing?* (Lee, 1986, p. 317). In the screen version, Darejan seems to tease him with the cross:

(26) *Do you want it? – Yes, sure. – You can't have it* (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:15:55 – 00:16:00).

On the one hand, the crucifix is a phenomenon because it is made of silver (a natural metal) and is a Christian symbol (refers to human culture). On the other hand, a vampire wears it.

According to the gothic literary canon, the effect of silver on vampires is unsure, though they are not as sensitive to it as werewolves, but the Christian crucifix destroys vampires physically (Curran, 2006, pp. 42, 124). Still, Darejan wears and values it: *"An heirloom. I am rather fond of it. I do not recommend you should try to take that"* (Lee, 1986, p. 317). Therefore, it is a special crucifix with noumenal qualities, which cannot harm this particular vampire. The object called *silver crucifix* or *silver cross* is a pheno-noumenon. The reason why Darejan values her *heirloom* is left behind the scene though there is a hint in the original.

(27) *"Do you recollect," said the Vampire, "you asked me about the crucifix."*  
*"I do recollect. It seemed odd to me, then. I did not understand, of course."*  
*"And you. **How would you have it, after...**" She waited, "After you leave me." (Lee, 1986, p. 319).*

Vassu used to wonder about the crucifix at first (underlined above), but when he is near death, he does not wonder anymore. Darejan is curious how he would have 'it' after he 'leaves' her. The 'it' must refer to Vassu's physical death euphemistically substituted by *after you leave me*. They both do not have doubts as for 'having it after', i.e. discuss life after death like Christians, and the crucifix is a conventional sign of resurrection and immortality for them. For Darejan who regenerates and rejuvenates by saving the mortals, the cross seems to stand for her personal life goal.

### 4.3. The open mise en scène

**Episode 3.** Snake and Darejan meet for the second time (no equivalent in the screen version).

In the open mise en scène, the characters appear in order and have an opportunity to leave it. In the third episode Snake (boldfaced below) is the first to appear. Then Darejan comes in (underlined). Vassu is the focaliser again.

(28) *Next day, a little before three in the afternoon, **Snake returned.** (...) Snake sat down, leaning back relaxedly in the chair. He was not relaxed, the old man knew (...) When the Vampire entered the room, Snake, practised, a gigolo, came to his feet (Lee, 1986, p. 321).*

Darejan waited for Snake A decorative rose with a costly pearl (underlined), which is a symbol of a generous soul, and a new dress (boldfaced) make it clear that she prepared for the meeting.

(29) *She wore **a bone-white frock** that had been sent from Paris last year. **She had never worn it before.** Pinned at the neck was a black velvet rose with a single drop of dew shivering on a single petal: a pearl from the crown jewels of a czar (Ibid.).*

Vassu serves at table silently. Darejan is a vampire but it is evident from the next example that she has human habits: eats human food (boldfaced), drinks wine and coffee, smokes (underlined).

(30) *Vasyelu Gorin (...) returned later with the decanters and glasses. **The cold supper** had been laid out by people from the city who handled such things, **pâté and lobster and chicken.** (...) He decanted the wines. He arranged the silver coffee service, the boxes of different cigarettes (Ibid.).*

During the dinner, the cosy house (underlined below) is opposed to the cold night (boldfaced). It is so warm in the house that a moth wakes up.

(31) ***The winter night had settled by then against the house, the wind blew stonily, and, roused by the brilliantly lighted rooms, a moth was dashing itself between the candles and the coloured fruits. The old man caught it in a crystal goblet, took it away, let it go into the darkness** (Ibid.).*

Darejan is the first to leave the mise en scène, *in the last half hour before dawn.* Vassu notices internal transformation in her, which is indicative of psychological rejuvenation and is expressed by the nouns *sheen, glare, newness* and the verbal noun *a refinding* (boldfaced below) as well as the adjectives (underlined).

(32) *In the last half hour before dawn, she came quietly from the salon, and up the stair. The old man knew she had seen him as he waited in the shadows. That she did not look at him or call to him was her attempt to spare him this sudden **sheen** that was upon her, its direct and pitiless glare. (...) Her eyes were young, full of a primal **refinding,** full of utter newness (Ibid.).*

In five hours, Snake also disappears (underlined). He takes the cigarettes but does not steal anything (boldfaced), which is also a mark of some psychological change.

(33) *In the salon, Snake slept (...) Five hours later, Snake was noiselessly gone. He had taken all the cigarettes, **but nothing else** (Lee, 1986, p. 322).*

To sum up the scene, the participants are Snake, Darejan and Vassu as the focaliser. The purposes of Snake and Darejan merge into knowing each other better to consider and admit the mutual potential in the “lady—servant” relations. Darejan seems to be a liberal lady who shares a table with the future ranfield though the dinner may also be a part of the ritual started in the previous scene.

The phenomena of this *mise en scène* are:

- 1) the chair where Snake *sat, leaning back relaxedly; he was not relaxed* (Lee, 1986, p. 321);
- 2) Darejan’s outfit (*a bone-white frock, a black velvet rose with a pearl from the crown jewels*);
- 3) *the cold supper – pâté, lobster and chicken, the wines, coffee, and the boxes of cigarettes.*

The pheno-noumen is the moth. Vassu *caught it in a crystal goblet, and let it go into the darkness*. The moth is a symbol of his near death (for further details, see the analysis of the last *mise en scène*).

#### **Episode 4. Regeneration.**

In the original, the episode is based on Vassu’s internal reflection accompanying the main action that concentrates around saving Snake. The *mise en scène* is of a special interest for understanding the symbolism of the story, for Vassu perceives it via phenomena and noumena that make up a generalised picture of all the participants in the successive process of their transformation.

The characters appear in turn again. First, Vassu finds the wounded Snake. He is right about the aura of death about him: for obscure reasons (boldfaced below), he was badly wounded (underlined):

- (34) *“Knifed me,” said Snake. “Crawled all this way. (...) **I don’t know** (...) **who sent them. Plenty would like to**... How bad is it? I didn’t think it was so bad”* (Lee, 1986, p. 325).

*Holding the young man* (Lee, 1986, p. 325), Vassu takes Snake to the hall where Darejan meets them on the lowest stair (underlined).

- (35) *As Vasyelu entered the hall, the Vampire was already on the lowest stair* (Lee, 1986, p. 326).

He refuses to watch the rest of the ritual as it is too personal (especially if another man (boldfaced) is involved), and Darejan lets him go (underlined).

- (36) *“Wait.” she said. – “No, Princess. **This is a private thing.** Between the two of you, as once it was between us. I do not want to see it, Princess. **I do not want to see it with another.**” She looked at him, for a moment like a child, sorry to have distressed him, unwilling to give in. Then she nodded. “Go then, my dear.” (Lee, 1986, p. 326)*

Vassu leaves the *mise en scène*, but seems to hear how the ritual goes on (boldfaced below) since he was also a part of it several centuries ago.

Her blood cured all his wounds, and the death dropped from him (underlined):

- (37) *He went away at once. So he did not witness it as she left the stair, and knelt beside Snake on the Turkish carpet newly coloured with blood. Yet, **it seemed to him he heard** (...) **the whisper of the tiny dagger parting her flesh** (...) She had given him her blood. (...) Unique elixir, it had saved him. All wounds had healed. Death had dropped from him like a torn skin, and everything he had been (Lee, 1986, pp. 326-327).*

Darejan is reborn (boldfaced below) again, and Vassu walks into the dark (underlined) *tenderly* and *without misgiving*, just the way he loves his lady.

Walking into the dark is the metaphor of his death.

- (38) *Everything had come back to her. She **was reborn**. (...) The old man (...) began to climb the stairs. (...) At the head of the stair, beyond the lamp, the dark was gentle (...) Vasyelu walked forward into the dark without misgiving, tenderly. How he had loved her* (Lee, 1986, pp. 327-328).

The functions of all the participants in the *mise en scène* reveal through the unity of phenomena and noumena. The phenomena are: *the symbol of cutting all the old things off* – the knife used to wound Snake and the small dagger used to cut Darejan’s veins; the lowest stair Darejan stepped from to help Snake (*the symbol of the lady’s mercy*). The noumena are: Darejan’s blood (*blood, unique elixir*); the *unwanted* and unrealised Snake's death (metaphorised as the dead skin – *death dropped from him like a torn skin*), and the *desired death* on the part of Vassu (metaphorised as *the gentle dark*).

All three characters have the same aim to transform through death.

The name of the story – *Nunc dimittis* – also reveals the message of the last *mise en scène*, which alludes to *Sanctum Jesu Christi Evangelium secundum Lucam*, Chapter 2: 29-30: *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace, quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum* (p. 119). The English translation of this verse from *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (the equivalent *nunc dimittis* is underlined below) reads as follows: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thine salvation* (p. 74).

Vassu’s physical death is an act of generous absolution, the master’s mercy on the part of Darejan who is now saved and reborn, and Vassu sees it with his own eyes (*Everything had come back to her. She **was reborn***). He lets Snake take on his (Vassu’s) life and thus sets Darejan free.

The described *mise en scène* is much shorter in the screen version. The symbolism of the original is partially lost, for Vassu brings Snake to Darejan's bedroom where she kisses the old man and lets him go. Her dialogue with the wounded Snake lasts for only forty five seconds (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:24:14 – 00:24:59), and she uses them to show the customs of the Draculas’ branch (boldfaced below).

- (39) “*You are strong, Snake.*”

“*I don’t feel strong.*”

“*No-no, you are. Vassu told you that the Draculas’ name was another brunch of the family.*”

***Our customs are different too. You shall see it***” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:24:14 – 00:24:42).

The demonstration visualises *the whisper of the tiny dagger parting her flesh* described in the original. She cuts her throat, lets Snake drink her blood (boldfaced below), and comments on the future results (underlined):

- (40) ***Come, drink. Drink, all your wounds will be healed. Death will drop from you like a toad’s skin*** (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:24:46 – 00:24:59).

Death is metaphorized as taking off not the snake’s skin (though it may seem logical as the name of the character is Snake), but the *toad’s skin*. In the screen version, another symbolic layer is created with reference to *The toad prince; or iron Henry* by the Brothers Grimm. In this fairy tale, the prince returns into the human form from the toad’s one and is accepted by the princess as a claimant

to her hand. According to the classification of folklore plots, the synopsis of the tale is as follows (Aarne & Thompson, 1961, pp. 149-150):

- A careless princess promises herself to a toad.
- The aspirant toad reminds of the promise by appearing first at the door of the house where the princess lives, then at her table, and, finally, asks to take it to bed.
- The toad turns into a lovely prince.

The conditions of transformation are:

- A. The toad must be taken to sleep in the royal bed.
- B. The princess should kiss the toad.
- C. The toad's head should be cut off.
- D. The toad must be thrown against the wall.
- E. The toad's skin is to be burnt down.

The ritual followed by Snake in his visits to Darejan's house corresponds to the above-mentioned synopsis and conditions. The initiation of a ranfield presumes that an ugly toad should become the prince. Snake comes to Darejan's door together with Vassu; Darejan has a dinner with him and converts him in her bedroom into the new ranfield. Thereupon he throws off his own death and former life of a criminal.

**The toad's skin** in *Nunc dimittis* symbolises the nature of Snake before meeting Vassu. He is a gigolo, thief, robber, and murderer. **The human form** enfolds the knowledge and manners that Darejan shared with Vassu and is going to share with Snake. An educated personality is described as the one who speaks five languages and reads three others (boldfaced below), has discovered music, art, and astronomy (underlined), knows and understands what *profundity* and *mercy* stand for (in sparse print).

- (41) *She had taught Vasyelu Gorin **how to speak five languages, and how to read three others.** She had allowed him to discover music, and art, history and the stars; profundity, mercy (Lee, 1986, p. 322).*

Vassu takes on himself the physical part of making the prince out of Snake, for he throws the young man against the wall in the first *mise en scène*: *the old man's attacker **slammed against the wet grey wall and rolled down it.*** The symbolic beheading (the knife-wound that could lead to death under other circumstances) is accomplished by unnamed killers. The toad's skin starts being burnt from the very first meeting with Darejan when she is categorised as a *woman that burns*.

In the screen version, two remaining conditions are visualised: the kiss and the invitation to bed.

A servant sharing bed and table with his lady seems to be the contradictory role of a ranfield.

A minute after Snake throws off the toad's skin (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:24:59), Vassu is shown dying in the screen version (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:25:59). His soul flies away as soon as Snake lives through all the initiation stages.

If Snake is the toad, Vassu is the servant named Henry from the same tale. The connection between the toad and the servant is metaphorised as the iron chains (Mieder, 2016, p. 386): Henry is so depressed by the miserable toad's life of his prince that he decides to enchain his heart and to suffer. As soon as the princess removes the spell, the chains break, and the servant's heart gets free.

The screen version (in contrast to the original) also shows what happens after Vassu's death. In the last *mise en scène* (missing in the original), Snake, dressed as the new ranfield, brings a silver goblet of something to Darejan, and she stands up from her clavichord to take it.

#### **4.4. Emulating the initiation ritual in different types of *mise en scène***

Initiation is based on several **mystery factors** (factors of mystery) realised in the story as characters or objects. Even a single separate word may be a linguistic units that concentrates the meaning of the whole *mise en scène*.

The mystery factors correlate with types of *mise en scène* and depend on their features.

*The dispersion-factor* relates to the enclosed mise en scène. *The focus-factor* concerns the pass-through one. *The mobile factor* underlies the open mise en scène.

In the enclosed mise en scène the number of characters does not change; therefore, the meaning is distributed among all of them. In the pass-through one, there is the main mysterious character (or some related object). Like through a tunnel, this character (object) moves through the mise en scène of this type. In the open mise en scène, all characters (objects) are equal in their relation to mystery.

In the enclosed mise en scène of *Nunc dimittis* Vassu and Snake act. Some mysterious facets of their images have already been dwelt upon above, but the mystery factor expressed verbally refers to deeper symbolic layers of the analysed narrative.

Snake is a potential ranfield, for he has necessary qualities (the mark); however, he is just a criminal when he meets Vassu. Thus, his positive features are anabiotic and perceptible only to those versed in the specific matters. Snake's image in its integrity (with the superficial *serpent*-layer and the internal mystery in embryo) is a symbol of *the Orphic egg*, or the egg wrapped by a snake. In the rituals connected with worshipping Orpheus, the egg represents the soul in its preinitiated stage before the shell cracks. The snake is the spirit of creation and mystery (Hall, 2010: xxxiv, p. 131-132).

Snake's life splits into two parts – before and after meeting Vassu. The mystery of the Orphic soul in Snake's case has a linguistic expression in the pun *prey* – *pray*, first noticed by Vassu.

(42) “A vampire?” “Do you believe in such things? (...) You should, living (...) **preying** as you do.” “I never,” said Snake, “**pray**.”  
 “**Prey**,” said the old man (Lee, 1986, p. 316).

*Prey* – hunt, rob, extort, sponge on somebody, torment; *pray* – ask for mercy, beseech, appeal to God (Stevenson, 2010, p. 1408; Thompson, 1993, pp. 708, 700). The vampire's mercy is interpreted (see ut supra) according to St. Luke's, and the vampire is thus a deity, godlike being whose salvation and rebirth constitute the ranfield's life purpose. Before meeting Vassu (and Darejan), Snake preyed; after it he will worship the female idol and pray for her mercy. In the screen version, the meaning of prey concerns Darejan in her young years. Vassu draws Snake's attention to some sympathetic magic between the young man and Darejan, to their similar ways of living (underlined): “You lead similar lives **preying** on people in the night.” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:12:25).

Vassu's role in the ritual directly associates with breaking the Orphic egg and starting the main transformation. This act is his last mission – to wake up Snake's soul, make him stand up, stop crawling, and accept his destiny. The essence of this mission concentrates in “the categorical imperative” – “*Get up. Up.*” (Lee, 1986, p. 313) in the original and “*Get up.*” (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999: 00:09:17) in the film.

In *the pass-through* mise en scène, the main character is Snake. Vassu brings him to Darejan and observes his panic escape. Snake came to prey, not pray, and the reason for his disappointed hopes made him profoundly scared. From ‘prey’ to ‘pray’ there is a way of a proselyte. To choose it means to admit that Darejan is not the one preyed for, but the one preying. She can execute as well pardon.

Snake used to identify himself with fire and thought *women were moths that burnt* and could only pray for his mercy though their entreaties were *tones of tinsel and pleading*. However, in the opposition with Darejan he found himself a moth flying to a dangerous flame. He is the rustling tinsel, and he asks for mercy in front of *the sacred initiation flame* (Hall, 2010, p. 87).

The metaphor of rustling becomes Snake's leitmotif and ascribes a percussion tone to the mise en scène. The sound suggested by rustling tinsel reminds of a moth beating its winglets against an obstacle.

The way of denoting deceived women becomes the way of denoting him personally: *a moth that is burnt, tones of tinsel and pleading.*

Darejan is opposed to Snake directly in the screen version: *What am I? Tell me who you are!* (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:17:15 – 00:17:16), i.e. who are you compared to me?

Darejan **flames up** from finished coal and **burns** others, Snake is a **moth burnt**.

In the screen version, special effects with fire are employed: Darejan burns candles with a wave of her hand (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:14:11) and blazes up in front of Snake (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:17:14 – 00:17:21). These are the evident cases of formal imitation (see Section 2).

In the open *mise en scène*, the moth becomes the image (of soul) uniting Snake and Vassu. Still, the focal character is Vassu who dies at the end of the scene.

The symbol of the moth is as ancient and complicated as that of the snake. It is not visible in the dark and may refer to secret knowledge; it may also stand for a death messenger (Hall, 2010, p. 221), a human soul in search of the truth (Bettini, 1991, p. 203; Jung, 1976, p. 109; Kritsky & Cherry, 2000, p. 19), self-destruction and rebirth. On the one hand, it is a prototype of a petty creature flying to the fire through a short miserable life to burn in it, on the other hand, a purified and renewed soul that got free from vain thoughts and passions as if from a chrysalis (Bodenheimer, 1960, p. 6).

The freedom of this kind is discarnation, throwing off the outer husk. It unites the moth, the snake, and the toad as symbols of transformation (Taylor, 1998, pp. 58-60).

The mobile factor verbally concentrating Vassu's mystery reveals in two simple sentences:

1. *It would be good to rest* (Lee, 1986, p. 321) in the last but one *mise en scène*.
2. *Go then, my dear* (Lee, 1986, p. 326) in the last one.

The conditional mood – *It would be good to rest* – is used to oppose the indicative mood and the current Vassu's life; it is an alternative that has not happened yet but is to happen, for the toad is already at the table. In the next example, the boldfaced sentence differs grammatically from other sentences used in the past tense of the indicative mood. It may seem a coincidence, for representing something imagined and non-existent requires the conditional mood. However, when Vassu also *imagines* how the moth fights against the wind and falls dead (underlined below), the conditional mood is not used:

- (43) *The winter night had settled by then against the house, the wind blew stonily, and, roused by the brilliantly lighted rooms, a moth was dashing itself between the candles and the coloured fruits. The old man caught it in a crystal goblet, took it away, let it go into the darkness. For a hundred years and more, he had never killed anything (...) Vasyelu Gorin imagined the frail moth beating its wings against the huge wings of the wind, falling spent to the ground. It would be good to rest (Lee, 1986, p. 321).*

He thinks about the living moth in the indicative mood. This reality has happened. The old man let the moth out of the window to die in the wind. It cannot be otherwise, and the moth will not live in *the winter night*. Still, the sentence in the conditional mood expresses something else: he is thinking of himself; the fate of this moth is the same that is going to happen to him. The moth is the herald of his death and the symbol of his soul.

A strong wind also metaphorises the forces drawing the moth of a human soul to the land of the dead (Bettini, 1991, p. 206). In the screen version, the moth appears at the very beginning (Mulcahy & Wexler, 1999, 00:02:13 – 00:02:24) announcing the end at the third minute. The first frames of the feature film visualise the last sentences of the literary original:

- (44) *Vasyelu walked forward into the dark without misgiving, tenderly. How he had loved her* (Lee, 1986, p. 328).

Vassu went into the dark of death as quietly as the moth – into the dark of the cold night.

The sentence in the imperative mood (*Go then, my dear*) concerns Vassu as well and corresponds to the name of the story (*Nunc dimittis – now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace*).

These words pronounced by Darejan are a part of the ritual and a verbal permission to resign the ranfield's commission with the only possible end for the old ranfield – death. In the screen version, Vassu is shown dead by the temps mort technique (see Section 2) in a minute after the permission.

To sum it up, all four factors concentrate the event of the whole story and have distinct verbal expressions:

1. Snake sees his real role (*prey – pray*) when he meets Vassu (*Get up*).
2. Darejan demonstrates what Snake is (*a burnt moth, tones of tinsel and pleading*) when they meet for the first time.
3. Vassu feels his near death (*It would be good to rest*) when Darejan and Snake meet for the second time.
4. Vassu is set free by Darejan and has a permission to die (*Go then, my dear*) when Snake appears in the house for the third time.

## 5. Discussion

In accord with the previous theoretical research outlined in Section 2, *Nunc dimittis* (the narrative under analysis) proves to be a case of extracompositional intermediality (Wolf, 2002, pp. 18-21), remediation (Bolter & Grusin, 1999), transmodalization (Genette, 1997), or intersemiotic transposition (Englund, 2010; Rajewski; Clüver), all the terms relating to shared media, or else medial territories. The primary medium is that of the source work – the original. The word *transponent* suggests the *trans-* aspect of the emergent work (its being reinterpreted in other media), and the *-ponent* one that may stand for *exponent* (something set out), *opponent* (something adverse) and *component* (something of a larger whole) with the enclosed *ponere* ('put, place') element in the meanings (Klein, 1966, pp. 325, 564, 1088).

The work as an exponent represents the original in a new medium; the work as the opponent sets itself versus the original. As a component, it indicates that the derived work is a part of the matrix.

The event recounted in *Nunc dimittis* is preserved in both original and cinematic versions, so the story represents an instance of authentic retranslation with minor changes, insignificant for the message.

The term *retranslation* contributes to classifying ways of story-transfers among media and makes each of the transponents more individual.

The *translation* element also has a metaphoric clue *medium is a language* and thus presupposes additional semiotic load pertaining to a possible target language.

On the intracompositional level of intermediality theory, the present article adds to the study of explicit and implicit intermedial reference by employing decryption to reveal recognisable surface meanings and possible contextual depth of each systemic or individual allusion.

The study of *mise en scène* is developed by a narrative-relevant classification that organises not only the frame space, characters' positioning, props, location, or viewpoint, but also regulates the focus on characters and correlates this focus with verbal mystery factors.

## 6. Conclusion

In the article, narrative organization of the event is considered through the system of different types of *mise en scène* in the gothic story *Nunc dimittis*, the latter also adapted under the same name on screen.

The main event of the story lies in the known antagonising the unknown in four episodes throughout the whole narrative. A young daring criminal represents the known; a generous female vampire and her servant are on the part of the unknown. With the event in both versions being

essentially unaltered, the literary and filmic narratives make up an intermedial matrix based on the authentic retranslation. The literary one is the original, i.e. the source work, and the screen version is its transponent, i.e., the product of intermedial, or extracompositional reinterpretation.

The term *mise en scène*, borrowed from film and theatre studies, helps allowing for all elements that contribute to the main event in each episode. An episode is thus a meaningful part of the event as a system. *Mise en scène* arranges the characters in episodes and reveals the functions of significant objects (phenomena, noumena and their combinations).

The characters act in enclosed, pass-through, and open types of *mise en scène*. The enclosed *mise en scène* restricts the initial and final number of characters, the open *mise en scène*, in contrast to it, has no restriction, and the pass-through *mise en scène* focuses upon one of the characters. All these types correlate with factors of mystery actuated in the story as characters or objects. A single word that indicates such a factor may express the meaning of the whole *mise en scène*. The dispersion-factor relates to the enclosed *mise en scène*, the focus-factor concerns the pass-through one, the mobile factor refers to the open type. All factors are verbalised in accord with those characters that act in each *mise en scène*, as well as with visual images accompanying them on screen. Slight differences between the original and its transponent refer to the symbolic treatment of the names of characters and their actions, which deepen the original message.

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